



Date: July 14, 2006

To: California Public Library Directors

From: Susan Hildreth
State Librarian of California *Susan Hildreth*

Subject: Early Learning with Families @ Your Library
USING CHILD DEVELOPMENT KNOWLEDGE TO ENRICH LIBRARY SERVICES

I am pleased to announce the launch of the statewide Early Learning with Families (ELF) Initiative for 2006/07. This LSTA supported initiative is envisioned as a joint venture between Children's Services and Library Literacy Services (or a community literacy agency where no Library Literacy service exists) to transform how libraries serve babies, toddlers, preschoolers, their parents, and childcare providers. It is intended to enhance current library services by basing them on children's developmental stages and current early learning and brain development research. It will include individual grants to participating libraries as well as a grant to the North Bay Cooperative Library System for support services.

In the first year of this ELF initiative we will:

- Provide three regional ELF trainings regarding early learning concepts and program models;
- Assist selected libraries with initial implementation of some aspect of an early learning model with small mini-grants of up to \$5,000;
- Provide online resources to support these new library programs as well as resources that augment existing early learning library programs;
- Develop promotional resources and a branding identity to facilitate local outreach; and
- Expand opportunities for creative community collaborations.

Libraries will need to apply to be considered for selection into one of the three regional trainings that will serve as the focus of this first year of the ELF initiative. These trainings are designed for those libraries that need a basic understanding of child development and early learning theory and are interested in strategies for utilizing this knowledge to inform library service provision for young children. Selection will be based on the criteria outlined in the Application Guidelines. For those libraries already engaged in providing such early learning services, they will be invited to provide input regarding the resources, promotional materials, and collaborative partnership opportunities developed through this ELF initiative. These resources will be made available to all California libraries via an ELF website.

The Guidelines and Application form for this Early Learning with Families initiative can be found at www.library.ca.gov/html/lsta_app_06_07.cfm under Targeted Grants. If you have any questions regarding this new initiative, please contact Suzanne Flint at the California State Library at **916-651-9796** or **sflint@library.ca.gov**.